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A

STATE

OF THE

REPRESENTATION

OF THE

PEOPLE OF ENGLAND,

ON THE

PRINCIPLES of Mr. PITT in 1785 ;

WITH AN ANNEXED

STATE OF ADDITIONAL PROPOSITIONS,

BY THE

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LATE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE OF ASSOCIATION
OF THE COUNTY OF YORK.

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STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN SENATE

REPORT OF THE

COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

FOR THE YEAR 1907

ALLEGHENY

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FOR THE YEAR 1907

ALLEGHENY

A
S T A T E
OF THE
REPRESENTATION, &c.

THE propofal which Mr. Pitt offered to Parliament in the Year 1785, for reforming the Representation of the People of England, was the result of much previous agitation of that fubject in General Meetings of the County of York and other confiderable Diftricts; and during that popular difcuffion the propriety of the meafure had appeared evident, from the pernicious confequences of the War with America, which Minifters, trufting to a corrupt Influence in Parliament, had dared to continue, long after the fenfe of the Public had been moft unequivocally declared againft it. It may juftly appear furprifing, therefore, that a propofal, from its intrinsic importance fo truly interefting, brought forward under circumftances fo decifive of its expediency, by a Minifter, who is undoubtedly one of the ableft Men of his age, and who at that moment was the Idol of the Public, fhould be heard with fo little attention, and fall fo quickly into oblivion, that the defign and drift of his Propofitions feem now to require illuftration. The truth is perhaps, that the Nation which had been ex-

asperated by the misconduct of former Ministers and the palpable corruption of Parliament, which had felt itself degraded as a great Political Power, and nearly ruined by that Civil War, was eager to enjoy the blessings of Peace, without much adverting to the means of future security. The *New* Ministers were esteemed friendly to the Liberty of the People, and Peace and Economy in the expenditure of Public Money were the professed principles on which their Administration was commenced.—From their virtue and wisdom, it was expected by many, that the evil consequences which unavoidably flow from the corrupt principle of our Government, would be mitigated as much as possible, and the work of Reformation, it was therefore thought might well be postponed to some future season, when the necessity for it would be more urgent. A considerable part of the Nation undoubtedly heard the proposal with aversion ; because it aimed to destroy their ill-acquired and unconstitutional power ; and by them it would be willingly consigned to oblivion as a project which they hoped never to see revived ; by some it was slighted because it came from a Minister whom they disapproved ; by others it was disregarded because they thought it not sufficiently extensive ; and many who approved the general principle, on which it was proposed to reform the Representation ; yet for want of having a statement of the several particular

ticular articles of the Plan, distinctly laid before their eyes, were too indolent to examine it with sufficient attention to obtain any exact comprehension of it.

That a proposal of such great importance to the Peace and Liberty of the Nation, might neither be misunderstood nor thrown aside and forgotten, it was much wished soon after it had been rejected by Parliament, that the Minister himself would produce to the Public, the Heads of the Bill, and a particular statement of the Improvements intended by it. For reasons which may be conceived to have much force at that moment, and to be perfectly consistent with a sincere intention to produce such Papers at some future time, it is probable that the Publication alluded to, was postponed. From him it would have come forth with the greatest propriety, and with the most powerful effect.—But since an authentic Publication, specifying distinctly the particular changes which on the principles of his Plan were intended, or probably would have been effected in the Representation of the People of England, seems not now to be reasonably expected from Mr. Pitt, I trust the task may be undertaken by another person with propriety, and possibly, not without some beneficial effect. It is necessary, however, that the Reader should be apprised, that the following statement of improvements in our Representation on the principles proposed by Mr. Pitt, is not an authentic com-

munication of a Paper drawn by Him, and published either with his consent, or without it; it is only a Statement of changes, which, on those principles, possibly might have taken place, and that Statement has been minutely drawn out, and adapted to the supposed population of the kingdom, merely from the Editor's recollection of those principles, as generally stated in Mr. Pitt's Speech to Parliament, and in the printed Explanation of them, which had been seen and approved by Mr. Pitt, and with his consent submitted by the Editor, to the consideration of a Public Meeting as a faithful summary of the measures intended; and though the Editor will not assert that the distributions of Members to the several Counties here pointed out, are exactly in the same proportion as they would have been proposed by Mr. Pitt, or that on his principles various other distributions may not be pointed out, which may appear better and more convenient; yet the statement here given, having been made from an authentic list of Houses throughout the Kingdom, which was laid before the House of Commons, in the year 1781, he flatters himself it will be found sufficiently accurate to answer the purpose intended; which was to convince the Public from a particular view of the probable operations of the Bill in question, that a Political Reform on those principles would be of infinitely greater value, than the major part of the Community seems to

to have thought ; and possibly to convince the most ardent Reformers, that although Justice and the more extended expectations of the People may now render some additional improvements expedient, respecting the enlargement of the Right of Suffrage, and the comprehension of the People of Scotland, yet those improvements ought to be such as would accord with the general views of the Plan in question, and indeed would not be deviations from that Plan, but only a more complete application of its principles to the actual circumstances of the case. The particular improvements which the more expanded ideas of the People seem to require, which would be agreeable to the rules of justice, and would accord well with the regulations before proposed, will be annexed to the following

STATE of the REPRESENTATION of the PEOPLE of ENGLAND, as it might have been improved on the principles of Mr. PITT's Plan, in the Year 1785.

| <i>Counties.</i> | <i>Number of County Members added.</i> | <i>Number of Members to each County.</i> |
|------------------|--|--|
| Bedfordshire, | 1 | 3 |
| Berkshire, | 1 | 3 |
| Buckinghamshire, | 1 | 3 |
| Cambridgeshire, | 1 | 3 |
| Cheshire, | 1 | 3 |
| Cornwall, | 1 | 3 |
| Cumberland, | 1 | 3 |
| Derbyshire, | 1 | 3 |
| Devonshire, | 3 | 5 |
| Dorsetshire, | 1 | 3 |
| Durham, | 1 | 3 |
| | | Essex, |

| <i>Counties.</i> | <i>Number of County Members added.</i> | <i>Number of Members to each County.</i> |
|-------------------|---|--|
| Essex, | 2 | 4 |
| Gloucestershire, | 2 | 4 |
| Hampshire, | 2 | 4 |
| Herefordshire, | 1 | 3 |
| Hertfordshire, | 1 | 3 |
| Huntingdonshire, | | 2 |
| Kent, | 3 | 5 |
| Lancashire, | 3 | 5 |
| Leicestershire, | 2 | 4 |
| Lincolnshire, | 3 | 5 |
| Middlesex, | 3 | 5 |
| Monmouthshire, | | 2 |
| Norfolk, | 3 | 5 |
| Northumberland, | 2 | 4 |
| Nottinghamshire, | 1 | 3 |
| Northamptonshire, | 2 | 4 |
| Oxfordshire, | 1 | 3 |
| Rutlandshire, | | 2 |
| Shropshire, | 2 | 4 |
| Somersetshire, | 2 | 4 |
| Staffordshire, | 2 | 4 |
| Suffolk, | 2 | 4 |
| Sussex, | 1 | 3 |
| Surry, | 2 | 4 |
| Warwickshire, | 2 | 4 |
| Westmorland, | | 2 |
| Wiltshire, | 2 | 4 |
| Worcestershire, | 1 | 3 |
| Yorkshire, | 7 { West Riding, 4 } { North Riding, 3 } { East Riding, 2 } | 9 |
| Total | 67 | 147 |

Members added to the Metropolis.

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Marybone, Pancras, &c. | 2 |
| Westminster, | 2 |
| Southwark, | 1 |
| — | 5 |

*Members granted to four great Unrepresented
Towns.*

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Birmingham, | 2 |
| Manchester, | 2 |
| Sheffield, | 2 |
| Leeds, | 2 |
| — | 8 |

Members

Members to be chosen by Popular Election in 10 Cities and Towns, at present deprived of that Right by their respective Corporations.

| | |
|--------------|----|
| Bath, | 2 |
| Buckingham, | 2 |
| Bury, | 2 |
| Tiverton, | 2 |
| Scarborough, | 2 |
| Portsmouth, | 2 |
| Salisbury, | 2 |
| Winchester, | 2 |
| Dartmouth, | 2 |
| Plymouth, | 2 |
| | — |
| | 20 |

RECAPITULATION.

| | Members. |
|---|----------|
| Total addition to England for Counties, | 67 |
| To the Metropolis, | 5 |
| To great Unrepresented Towns, | 8 |
| Addition by Popular Elections in 10 Cities and Towns, at present deprived of that privilege by their respective Corporations, | 20 |
| Total addition to the popular Representation, | 100 |

For which would be wanted the abolition of 40 Rotten Boroughs, &c. to avoid increasing the number of the House of Commons.

To this great advantage, it was proposed to add another of no small importance, by augmenting the Constituent Body, nearly with the addition of 100,000 Voters ; to be effected by imparting the right of voting to Copyholders, to certain Unrepresented Freeholders, and also to decent Householders in the Metropolis, in four great unrepresented Towns, and in ten Cities and Towns in which the Right of Election was intended to be thrown open. If this Plan had been accepted by Parliament, means had been thought of for gradually weeding out all the little Boroughs not containing 400 Houses.

State

STATE OF ADDITIONAL PROPOSITIONS Suggested in the Year 1793.

THE most obvious and necessary addition to Mr. Pitt's Plan is, that it should be extended to the Representation of the People of Scotland; in such a manner, as to remove that degrading exception by which six of the Counties of Scotland are reduced to alternate Representation; to place Edinburgh and some other principal Cities, in respect of their representative importance on a footing of equality with the great Towns of England; and to regulate Elections in Scotland by the same general rules to which they are subject in England.

Another necessary addition to that Plan seems to be, the extension of the Right of Suffrage to all decent Householders throughout Great-Britain.

By these regulations the following COUNTIES of SCOTLAND would receive an addition of THREE MEMBERS; so that each of those Counties would be constantly represented by ONE MEMBER.

| <i>Counties.</i> | <i>County Members.</i> | <i>Addition.</i> | <i>Number of County Mem. in Scotland.</i> |
|-------------------|------------------------|------------------|---|
| Caithnessshire, | 1 | } | 3 |
| Cromartyshire, | 1 | | |
| Kinrossshire, | 1 | | |
| Buteshire, | 1 | | |
| Clackmannanshire, | 1 | | |
| Nairnshire | 1 | } | |
| Other Counties | 27 | | |

The following CITIES and TOWNS of SCOTLAND would receive an addition of SEVEN MEMBERS, viz.

| <i>Cities and Towns.</i> | <i>Members added to Cities & Towns.</i> | <i>Total addition.</i> | <i>Num. of Mem. for Cities & Towns in Scotland.</i> |
|--|---|------------------------|---|
| Edinburgh, | 1 | } | 7 |
| Glasgow, | 2 | | |
| Aberdeen, | 2 | | |
| Dundee, | 1 | | |
| Paisley,* | 1 | | |
| Present number of Members for Cities and Towns, | 15 | | 22 |
| Total Representation of Scotland, | | | 55 |

The Elections which at present are confined to a few Members of a Corporation in each of the following Towns of England, by these regulations would become Popular Elections, viz.

| | <i>Addition of Constitutional Members by Popular Elections in four Towns of England.</i> |
|--------------|--|
| Marlborough, | } |
| Launceston, | |
| Poole, | |
| Thetford, | |
| | 8 |

By these regulations, also, the Body of Constituents in England, on any reasonable definition of the Persons meant by "decent Householders" would receive an addition probably, not short of 150,000 Voters. The same regulations adding to the present Electors in Scotland, Freeholders and Copyholders of 40 shillings value, and decent Householders would probably increase the Constituent Body there by an augmentation of nearly 100,000 Voters. The total augmentation of Voters by these regulations throughout Great-Britain, would be nearly 250,000 *Additional Voters*.

* It might not be improper, perhaps, to annex to Paisley some of the small Unrepresented Burghs in its neighbourhood, to take a part in Election for Representatives of that Town. The small share of the Representation at present enjoyed by Glasgow, Aberdeen and Dundee, would devolve upon the other Burghs with which they are connected and increase their share,

JOINT RECAPITULATION.

By Mr. PITT's PLAN enlarged in the manner
here stated.

| | | <i>County Members.</i> |
|--|---|---|
| The Representation of the Counties of England would be increased to | } | 147 |
| That of Wales would remain | | 12 |
| That of Scotland would be increased to | | 33 |
| Total County Representation of Great-Britain would be | | 192 |
| | | |
| | | <i>Members for Cities and Towns of England.</i> |
| The Representation of the Cities and Towns of England would be diminished by the abolition of forty of the most obnoxious Boroughs by voluntary surrender; but that of the Towns in Wales would remain the same; and the right of being represented by eight Members would be granted to four Unrepresented Towns; and the right of being represented by five Members would be granted to certain Districts of the Metropolis of England: the Representation of the Cities and Towns of England and Wales would therefore be—— | } | 354 |
| That of the Cities and Towns of Scotland would be increased to | | 22 |
| The total Representation of the Cities and Towns of Great-Britain would be | | 376 |
| | | |
| | | <i>Members for Great Britain.</i> |
| The total Representation of the Counties, Cities, and Towns of Great-Britain, by adding ten Members to Scotland would be | } | 568 |

Or, if diminishing the relative proportion of the English Representation to that of Scotland, should be thought less objectionable than adding to the present number of the House of Commons,

Commons, the inconvenience might be avoided by the farther abolition of five obnoxious Boroughs, by voluntary surrender, to be obtained by purchase, as was proposed by Mr. Pitt.

To secure the execution of this enlarged Plan, it is proposed that the regulation for granting ten Members to the District of Marybone and Pancras, to Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield and Leeds, and also three to the six Counties of Scotland which are under alternate Representation, and seven to Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Dundee, and Paisley, should take place at the next General Election : and that a list of all the Counties of England, reckoning each of the Ridings of Yorkshire as a County, should be formed by lot, and when any Borough should have surrendered its Franchise in the manner already stated, the share of Representation so surrendered should be transferred to the County or Riding, the name of which may stand first upon the list so formed and so to the next upon the list progressively till the whole transfers designed for the Counties may have been made. The City of Westminster and the Borough of Southwark, might either be classed in this list in the same manner as the Counties, or might be placed at the end of it, as the last Districts to which the intended Transfer should be made: and still more to promote the speedy execution of this Plan, it seems expedient that 100,000*l.* be added to the sum of one million

lion

lion, proposed to be set apart for the purchase of obnoxious Boroughs, in order, that out of the said 100,000*l.* ten sums of ten thousand pounds each may be added to ten sums of twenty thousand pounds each, as was originally proposed for the said purchase; and the united sums, with their accumulations of interest, respectively may be paid to the first ten Boroughs which shall surrender their obnoxious Franchises. In pursuance of these ideas, it is to be understood, that no Transfer of the privilege of Representation would be wanted, on account of the ten Members proposed to be added to the Counties, Cities, and Towns of Scotland; that from the five Boroughs which should first have surrendered that privilege, a transfer of their share in the Representation would be esteemed to have been made in advance, to the unrepresented district of Marybone, &c. and to the great Unrepresented Towns of Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield, and Leeds; and that the shares in the Representation of thirty-five Boroughs remaining to be disfranchised as aforesaid, would be directed by Parliament to be transferred to the several Counties or Ridings of England, to the City of Westminster, and to the Borough of Southwark, in the order in which their names might stand in a list formed in the manner prescribed, till the whole transfers intended had been completely made: and it would be necessary that certain Persons, being

partly

partly Members of the House of Commons, and partly private individuals, should be appointed with authority to act in this case, as Commissioners or Trustees for the Public; that the sums of money wanted for the several purchases which have been proposed, with the growing interest of the same, should be vested in them, and that they should have full power to treat with all Persons interested in any Borough or Boroughs not containing 400 houses, and to agree with them, or the majority of them upon terms for the purchase of the surrender of their privilege of Representation; and finally to complete the said purchase: the completion of which purchase the Commissioners aforesaid should be required within a certain short time to be limited by Parliament, to notify to the House of Commons; under whose direction the Speaker of the House should be required to give notice of the same in the Gazette, and also to name the County, City or Town, to which the then purchased share of Representation was to be transferred, to which notice and nomination the returning officer of the County, City, or Town so intitled to a share of the Representation which had been purchased, should be bound to pay due attention, and to proceed to Election in such manner as the Law might in this case direct. By these provisions, this enlarged Plan of improvements would be carried into immediate effect, respect-

ing those great Unrepresented Towns and Districts of the Metropolis, whose total privation of the fundamental right of Representation must be considered as the most oppressive grievance ; and also respecting those six Counties of Scotland which are subject to alternate Representation, and those great Cities and Towns of Scotland, whose share of Representation respectively is but an unit or the fraction of an unit, not enjoyed by the inhabitants at large, but monopolized by a few Corporators, who bear an almost imperceptible proportion to the rest. By the same means also, the Plan would be carried into speedy, if not immediate effect, respecting the abolition of the first five, and the proposed transfer of the Representative Right from five more of the obnoxious Boroughs, to several of the Counties of England. And when the Plan had been thus far carried into execution, by the said addition of Members to the above-mentioned Counties, Cities, and Towns of Scotland, and by the transfer of the Right of Representation from ten obnoxious Boroughs, to the district of Marybone, the four great Unrepresented Towns of Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield, and Leeds, and an adequate number of English Counties, the complete and speedy accomplishment of the whole Plan, would be indisputably secured.

STATE

STATE OF MONEY

Wanted for the PURCHASES proposed.

| | | |
|---|---|-----------|
| For purchasing the surrender of their Right of Representation from 40 Boroughs, and the surrender of their injurious monopoly of that Right from ten Corporate Bodies, it was proposed by Mr. Pitt to set apart the sum of— | } | 1,000,000 |
|---|---|-----------|

| | | |
|---|---|--------|
| For purchasing the surrender of that injurious monopoly from four more Corporate Bodies, it might be proper now to set apart the additional sum of— | } | 80,000 |
|---|---|--------|

| | | |
|---|---|---------|
| For securing the speedy execution of the Plan in the manner proposed— | } | 100,000 |
|---|---|---------|

| | | |
|---|---|-----------|
| So upon this Statement, the whole sum wanted would be no more than— | } | 1,180,000 |
|---|---|-----------|

| | | |
|---|---|-----------|
| But if five more Boroughs should be abolished in the same way, viz. by purchase to prevent an increase in the number of the House of Commons, the whole sum wanted in that case for the fullest execution of this great systematical improvement of our National Representation, in all its parts would not exceed— | } | 1,280,000 |
|---|---|-----------|

N. B. But this is not to be considered as the measure recommended, because by increasing difficulties in the execution, it might render the whole attempt abortive.

When this system had been fully carried into execution, a sum not exceeding 100,000l. would be sufficient to be set apart gradually to weed out the remaining small and obnoxious Boroughs, by obtaining a voluntary surrender of their injurious Franchises, in the mode which has been before stated; in order that their share of the Representation might be transferred from Boroughs which were depopulated to such great Unrepresented Towns, as might have arisen in the kingdom.

By these safe and peaceful means, the Representation of the People, having received this great systematical improvement, would approach as nearly to theoretical perfection, as the actual circumstances seem to allow, and thus might be prevented the relapse of the Constitution into that degraded state in which it now is; and from which the assailant of the popular part of it almost appears to derive some plausible pretext for his insulting denial,* that the House of Commons ever was, or ought to be considered as a Representation of the Commons: And consistently with this doctrine, the consequence which unavoidably flows from the loss or diminution of our Representative Rights, viz. a Senate NOT SPEAKING THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE, or in other words, a Government NOT BY CONSENT, is commended by this Defserter from the Cause of Liberty, as a fit Government for the British Nation; and the wealth to which the Nation has attained is absurdly imputed to the abuses and usurpations complained of, instead of being ascribed, as it ought to have been, to that degree of rational Liberty, which is still enjoyed under our impaired Constitution, and to the industry and patience of a well-deserving People, whom those abuses and usurpations have hitherto, neither discouraged, nor provoked beyond the bounds of moderation. Never did the ears of our Ancestors

* See the 3d Edition of Mr. Young's pamphlet, "The Example of France a Warning to Britain."

tingle at hearing doctrines maintained more directly destructive of their most valuable Rights. That such doctrines have been avowed in the face of the Public, were alone an alarming indication of the temper and disposition of the times. But when publications containing positions thus hostile to the Constitution, have been approved by numerous Associations, and circulated under the recommendation of the first legal Officers of the Crown, the time is surely come, when the Friends of the Constitution *in all its parts*, should add to their moderation activity and zeal to defend it, and should unite by every warrantable mean at once to support our limited Monarchy against its Republican Foes, and to maintain and secure that fundamental Right of Election, which is the Corner-Stone of our Political Edifice.

The effect of such a Reform of the Representation as has been here recommended would be powerful indeed; it cannot however be thought sufficiently efficacious if unaccompanied with other subsidiary measures, to restore our legislature to the purity of its ancient State.

The farther measures which the Popular Meetings in 1780 deemed necessary for the completion of this purpose are,

The reduction of the enormous Influence of the Crown :

The repeal of the Septennial Bill ;

And Regulations for preventing inconvenience and delay, tumult and expence at Elections.

Without these subsidiary measures, the Members returned to Parliament might be Men of respectable character as private Individuals; they might be chosen by truly respectable communities; not one depopulated or dependent Borough might remain intitled to elect Representatives, and yet, Parliament might be found utterly unable to perform its Constitutional Office to controul the Executive Power, and protect the rights and property of its Constituents.

For till Registers * of Voters have been established, and places of polling in small districts, in hundreds, or in parishes have been appointed, the exercise of the Right of Suffrage will continue too troublesome to the Voter, too expensive to the Candidate. In the counties, therefore, † Elections will seldom be contested; compromise will usually supersede the choice of the People; and thus, under the enormous expences permitted by the Law, even those sound parts of the Representation, though reinforced

* A Bill for keeping an accurate Register of Voters in the Counties, drawn some years ago by Earl Stanhope, by his strenuous exertions, and those of other virtuous Friends of Liberty, was carried through the two Houses of Parliament and passed into a Law. But in the very next Session, before the effect of it could be tried, this salutary act on slight pretences, was repealed. It was afterwards proposed to form a Register of Voters on the same principle as that, on which a list of Jurors at present is formed, but without success.

† The Freeholders of Yorkshire have not been polled for near 60 years. When Sir George Savile canvassed them in 1780, he found several, who never having been called to exercise their Elective Franchise, did not know they had a right to vote for more than one Candidate.

by additional Members, will remain in a great measure disabled to perform their Constitutional Functions. Till these and other Regulations of a similar tendency have been established, inconvenience and delay, disorder and tumult, will also continue to interrupt and disgrace the Poll. And till Laws wisely severe have restored integrity to our Elections, Candidates will be tempted to secure success by arts unknown in the purer ages of the Constitution, and not to be checked by Statutes, the sanctions of which are too feeble to deter offenders, and unwisely pointed less against the Candidates, the rich criminals who offer the bribe, than against the poor Voters by whom it may be accepted; but it is much to be feared, that when fraud and corruption have opened to such Candidates the door of Parliament, they may enter with them, and there contaminate their whole Political Conduct. Other Members may have scorned to stoop to the arts alluded to; and may have engaged in the Parliamentary Duty from motives of public spirit; and a laudable ambition to serve their Country; but while the habits of corruption are yet unchecked, candour cannot suppose such men to form a majority of the senate, nor would prudence wish to expose their virtue to the long trial of a Septennial Parliament, to the varied arts of Ministers, and their multitudinous means of seduction.

To reduce this immense fund of corruption within narrower bounds, much was well done

in the short Administration of Lord Rockingham, and the first years of the present Ministers official power were honourably marked by measures of the same laudable tendency. But much also was then left undone; since that time new taxes have unavoidably increased the means of influence, and in the course of a long administration many fresh abuses with great probability may be supposed to have arisen.

For a virtuous opposition to the evil principle of our Government cannot be lasting, or finally successful when supported merely by the force of popular opinion alone, without a radical reform of those abuses which respect the frame of Parliament itself. In the present State of our Government, the most upright Minister at his entrance into office, will have the mortification to find he cannot govern on the principles of his own integrity; he must swerve from them or resign his power; but power will be retained; the best official regulations will therefore be evaded; new means of influence will be obtained and employed; the complection of his Administration will be gradually affected by the prevailing colour of the system with which he is connected; and at last, his conduct and character will be thoroughly tinged with a fallow and distempered hue, the symptom of that putridity which has so often rendered his predecessors the objects of disgust. But when that radical Reform has been accomplished, æconomical regulations will be found to co-operate with powerful effect. Official Reforms will then

then tend still more to purify our Elections, and to preserve a fairly elected Senate from the baneful influence of corruption.

A shorter duration of Parliament also will then have the happiest consequences ; the Repeal of the Septennial Bill, will then with the greatest advantage to the Public complete the system of Political Renovation, and secure to the People the just and rational exercise of their Parliamentary Controul. At present they look back with envy and regret to those Primitive ages of the Constitution, when nominal and fraudulent votes were unknown, when their forefathers were unpolluted by the base arts of modern Elections; when the fountain of legislation was pure from the taint of corruption, and Parliaments, were venerated and beloved, as the firm and incorruptible Guardians of the People. By reverting to the genuine principles of the Constitution, and making this temperate application of them to the exigencies of these times, the seeds of discontent, and disaffection may be stifled, the growth of a Republican party may be stopt, and if not delayed too long, the Melioration of the Constitution, in this moderate and peaceful way, may happily be found to be the consummation of the popular wish.

Against the Plan of Mr. Pitt thus enlarged it may be foreseen that various objections will be urged; some of which will undoubtedly deserve serious consideration. But should the pensioned Advocate of the present system of abuses

abuses contend, that the discontents of the People are groundless and unreasonable, that a Parliament over which they have little regular influence, which has been named chiefly by the Crown and the Aristocracy, is best calculated to obtain the great purpose of the Constitution, viz. the Happiness of the People; and therefore, that no Reformation is necessary or ought to be conceded; the Reader's patience shall not be wearied here by an attempt to refute palpable absurdities. Or should the more cautious Foe to Liberty admit that Reformation is expedient, yet insist on the inexpediency of the time, the fallacy of that poor evasion, that frivolous but everlasting excuse, is too apparent to require detection. Or should the uncandid Adversary shift his ground, and change the direction of his attack from the plan proposed to the Person who proposed it, should he charge the Author of this Paper with the mean design to disparage Mr. Pitt and his Plan, or the malignant purpose to irritate popular discontent, and to excite commotion by suggesting more extensive propositions of Reform, than those he formerly recommended; little previous remark surely can be necessary to obviate the impression of those expected illiberalities.* The Plan of Mr. Pitt, if examined
by

* The extreme injustice of Satire usually defeats the malevolent purpose of it; and the most atrocious is not always the most mischievous calumniator. The coarsely-coloured picture which (in the 3d edition of Mr. Young's late pamphlet, intitled, *The Example of*

by theoretical rules, will certainly be found to fall far short of perfection ; it did not even aim to remove some of the grossest abuses which disgrace the British Representation ; but it was a wise proposal and well adapted to the State of Public Opinion in 1785 ; the guarded moderation of it evinced his sincerity at that time ; and if more extensive changes had been proposed, they would have been unauthorized by the previously declared wish of any considerable portion of the community. But since that time, the denial of redress, and a long protracted discussion have produced their usual effects ; upon the subject of Constitutional Rights, the ideas of the Public have been expanded, and a more extensive redress is sought in many parts of England, and throughout Scotland, than Mr. Pitt's original Plan proposed

of France a Warning to Britain) has been held out to the Public, as the Portrait of the Author of this Paper, he is satisfied, bears no just resemblance to his real character ; he hears the most criminal intentions there imputed to him, and his Political Principles in his Accuser's judgment, identified with those of the wildest Incendiary of France, viz. MARAT, and he hears it with unaltered serenity of mind ; because his conscience tells him IT IS NOT TRUE. He fears not the effect of what has been so vehemently urged against him in the Pamphlet in question, whether in the shape of incoherent reasoning, of mutilated quotation, or epithets of virulent abuse. His correspondence, and his other Political Papers will soon be laid before the Public, and will present a view of his conduct during several years in promoting a Reformation of Parliament, and hence on surer grounds, than the fierce invectives of his antagonist, the question may receive a clear decision, whether he has not acted uniformly as became a good Citizen, a Friend to the Peace, and to the Liberty of his Country.

to

to have given. The discontent of the People under their Constitutional Grievances, is the result of their enlarged knowledge of their Rights, and of the usurpations of Ministers and Peers; much has been well written, much has been eloquently spoken to demonstrate the injuries the Constitution has suffered; the fatal consequences which experience proves to flow from that source, and the necessity for some better security for the Liberty of the People, have been insisted on with equal energy by the wisest Ministers and the most unblemished Patriots.—It is needless to inquire therefore, whether the discontent of the People be owing more to the Parliamentary Speeches of a Pitt and a Savile, or to the Political Writings of a Burgh and a Price; to the late Revolution in America; or to the more recent events in France. It is evident, that discontent exists, and that it will be our true wisdom to allay that discontent by timely accommodation.

The original Plan of Mr. Pitt was excellently contrived to effect a temperate Reform in the most amicable manner, with the consent even of the Boroughs whose abolition was required; and in it also Principles respecting the Right of Suffrage were laid down, the extension of which, from a few districts to the kingdom at large, might well content the People, even in this more advanced state of their ideas and expectations; provided justice were done

done to our Northern Brethren, by extending an equitable relief to Scotland. It is neither wished therefore to depreciate Mr. Pitt's Plan, nor in any material instance to deviate from it; additions to it are proposed with a view more effectually to recommend the prudent and conciliatory principles of that Plan, to supersede all hazardous propositions of Reform, and to induce the generality of the People, to acquiesce in a System thus enlarged; which is neither violent in its mode of operation, nor extreme in any of its principles, which would obtain the necessary disfranchisements by consent, which would extend the Right of Suffrage to Men of some competent personal estate, whose share in the Representation would give fresh security to property; and which would finally remove all the great evils complained of in the State of our Representation, in England and in Scotland.

But any alteration in the proportion of Representatives established by the Act of Union between England and Scotland, it may be thought would be a breach of that Union: and certainly this objection if well founded, would be an insuperable difficulty. But what expounder of laws or of treaties will maintain, that a change beneficial to each of the contracting parties, and desired by both would be an infringement of the contract? The population of Scotland equals at least a fourth part of the population
of

of England, their Representation falls below the proportion of one to eleven. Scotland, therefore, collectively taken, is inadequately represented in the British Parliament; and the counties and populous cities in question, have still greater reason to complain of their very imperfect share of Constitutional Importance. The addition of ten Members to these counties and cities would be a benefit to them, and to Scotland in general, too evident to be insisted on. And whenever the People of England and their Representatives shall deem it a benefit to England to restore equitable Representation in that larger part of the Kingdom, they will undoubtedly deem it advantageous even to themselves, that abuses should not be suffered to remain in Scotland, to nourish discontent there, and to disgrace the work of Reformation here. At the time when the Act of Union was completed, to the lasting advantage of both Countries, the inadequacy of the portion of Representation allowed to Scotland was less, than it now is; the subsequent increase of population has rendered the grievance greater, it is now much more sensibly felt, and much more generally complained of, than it was at the time of the Union. It might be difficult then to avoid those disgraceful defects of counties alternately unrepresented, and great cities enjoying but the fraction of a vote, for the nomination of a single Member; but when England shall undertake

undertake a great systematical improvement of her own Representation, her conduct will be neither generous nor prudent, if she leave foul abuses in that of Scotland, as nuisances to taint the purity of the whole.

* The seeming Lover of Democracy, but in truth, under that appearance, the real Friend of Aristocracy with all its usurpations, may object to this enlarged Plan, as he before objected, to the narrower Plan of Mr. Pitt, that it is too favourable to Aristocratical Power. Even when applied to that narrower Plan, the objection is hardly reconcileable with sincerity on the one hand, or with common sense on the other. For what Man of common sense and experience, who is not warped by partiality from truth and candour, will assert, that the abolition of dependent boroughs would be no diminution of Aristocratical Power; or that the right of Election thrown open to the substantial householders in towns now subject to the monopoly of a corporation, would be no advantage to the People; or that the County Representation is not more free than that of the boroughs from the undue influence of the Peerage? The plan in question, without touching the just constitutional Power of the Crown and the Peers, would have corrected many of those abuses from which the new and dangerous influence of both

* See the Pamphlet of Mr. A. Dalrymple, entitled "Parliamentary Reform, as it is called, improper in the present State of this Country."

has derived its existence ; their adherents saw it distinctly, they united to oppose the proposition, and by their union it was defeated. But the objection, applied to the more extensive plan, would be still more manifestly futile and absurd. For let it be supposed that the various changes and regulations here proposed had been established ; and that a Parliament had been chosen under the influence of those principles ; and then let the Objector compare a Parliament so chosen with the Parliaments we have seen. It will be impossible that he should not perceive, that instead of an assembly dependent on the Government, and a few Noble Families, we should have a fair House of Commons, the great majority of whom had been elected by the decent householders, and persons of landed property in the counties and great towns of the Kingdom, such Members would feel their responsibility to their Constituents ; and they would act with a due regard to their sentiments and interest in preference to their own private emolument ; conscious that the trust reposed in them would soon revert to Men, whose confidence must be preserved or their delegation lost. And by these means operating throughout our improved system of Representation, private emolument and local interests would be overcome by the general interest of the Public, which is but the aggregate of the personal interests of the majority, in the different subdivisions of the community.

This

This objection, therefore, in the sense in which it has been combated, appears to be weak and ridiculous. But in fact it may have been the Objector's meaning only, if his meaning be collected from the single passage in question, that Mr. Pitt's Plan in 1785, would not have restored the Rights of the People so fully as they ought to be restored, and he may now admit, that in the present state of the public opinion a more extensive, but equally safe plan for the restoration of popular rights ought to be proposed. If these can be the sentiments of the Objector alluded to, he is agreed with the Author of this Piece, and the improvements here connected with Mr. Pitt's plan, may possibly meet his approbation.

There is yet another sense in which his objection may be understood, or an opinion to which it may afford some countenance, though not intended or perhaps perceived by the Objector himself; and it is too dangerous not to require some notice and brief refutation: viz. that in the event of a Reformation of Parliament, the Public ought to expect every sort and degree of Aristocratical Power to be beat down and entirely demolished. To destroy the usurped Power of Ministers and Nobles in the Boroughs, &c. is a just and a Constitutional, a safe and a practicable measure. But wholly to destroy the power of Men of great landed estates, or of great mercantile opulence were an attempt big with danger, and impossible

ble to be effected without flagrant injustice, and the ruin of the Constitution. Opulence ever must confer influence, and even command in a certain degree; all that can be justly or safely done for the reduction of aristocratical influence must still be supposed to have left what may be called **THE NATURAL WEIGHT OF PROPERTY.**

In the course of the last Century the aristocracy have gained a great accession of artificial power, by their various fraudulent encroachments and usurpations in the Boroughs; while in the same period the Democracy of Great-Britain has acquired much additional weight of property, and from the great diffusion of knowledge also is justly intitled to an augmentation of Political Importance. From these circumstances and from the progressive increase of Taxes, and the growing necessities of the State, it is easy to foresee that the People will not long endure the gross usurpations so justly complained of. If all redress were perseveringly refused by the Great, this were a conduct calculated to provoke Commotion with a train of terrible calamities. If nothing short of personal Representation would content the People, this were to provoke a refusal, and to lose the substance of Liberty in pursuit of the shadow of theoretical perfection; and even that shadow would be found to elude the grasp: Aristocratical superiority would still remain attached to superior opulence; it could only be
destroyed

destroyed by means absolutely inconsistent with justice and the Rights of Property. Society was formed to protect Men in the enjoyment of their personal Rights ; Society was also formed to protect Men in the enjoyment of their property. Each of these distinct and important ends of Government ought to be duly attended to ; for want of that attention, sometimes the Right of Property has been unjustly invaded, on pretences more or less specious, for an Agrarian Law, and an equal distribution of property, but much more frequently have the personal liberties of mankind been destroyed, from their excessive solicitude for the preservation of property, and their indifference, or insufficient care for their personal rights. Simplicity of manners, a nearly equal division of property, the non-existence of a great and profligate Capital, and other favourable circumstances, many of which appear to be combined in the situation of America, may render it not extremely difficult to form a Government perfectly agreeable to the principles of Liberty, and yet perfectly friendly to the Rights of Property. If this has not been done by the American People, their reasons for stopping short of speculative perfection, it may be justly presumed, were prudent and practically right. At least it may be safely asserted, that to attempt to form a Government on a perfect theory, where almost all the existing circumstances

stances are hostile to the attempt, were the extreme of mischievous folly. To force circumstances to bend to theory, has been the fatal resolution of the French People. And before their new Republic can be established on any stable foundation, great must be the calamities endured in France, and violent must be the change in the distribution of their property, and the consequent change of National Manners. For their sakes, and for the sake of the General Liberty of Mankind, their desperate rashness is deeply to be lamented ; and surely the interference of neighbouring powers, ostensibly to restore order and tranquillity among them, intentionally to restore their ancient despotism, and to dismember France, is not less deeply to be execrated : they have exasperated Men, cruel before, to tenfold cruelty ; they are sharers in the guilt of those Men, and a great part of the crimes and miseries of the French Nation may justly be charged to their hostile confederacy.*

Far be it from the British People to follow this fatal example ; far be it from them to hazard the miseries of a great Revolution in pursuit of that Republican Equality, to which their unequally divided property, their licentious populace, their luxurious capital, their widely extended empire, are all circumstances most decidedly unsuitable. The attempt in the last century to establish a Republic in this Coun-

* Viz. The Treaty of Pilnitz.

try, after having been the cause of much bloodshed, and many miseries, was finally unsuccessful: and should the similar enterprize in France prove more successful, their Republican Equality will be dearly purchased indeed. On the one hand, therefore, prudence pondering the defeat of that enterprize in England, and the miseries of the second Revolution of France dissuades us from the adoption of Republican Principles; on the other hand, honour, public spirit, and a sense of national injury, forbid us to crouch in abject acquiescence under the recent usurpations of the Great. The middle course of temperate Reformation, is that which benevolence and a just patriotic zeal will most approve, as the means to avoid hazard from the growth of Revolutionary Principles, and to carry the freedom and happiness of the community to the highest pitch, which in the present circumstances seems to be attainable. That they who possess the power may also have the wisdom to redress the grievances complained of, on moderate principles, and in a seasonable time, is greatly to be wished, and surely not altogether to be despaired. For it must be apparent to them, that the discontents of the People have been recently increased in a great degree, and it must be felt, that Parliament has lost the ancient confidence of the Nation; which must be regained by proper Reform, or there can be no safety for Government.—For every State is

liable to the calamitous vicissitudes of fortune ; and hence are usually excited popular discontent, commotion, and revolution ; but that Government is more peculiarly exposed to danger from stormy commotions of the People, on any calamitous event, which rests the foundation of its power, not on the basis of an equitable Constitution, and the unbought affection of the People, but on force, or fraud, on the dexterous application of the means of influence, and the skilful management of a venal or factious Senate. In a Country so governed, it is not the fleeting popularity of a Minister, nor even the personal worth of the Monarch himself, which, in times of great National Distress, can give stability to the Throne. The exile of Necker, and the fate of Louis unjustly bleeding on the Scaffold, are standing lessons to statesmen, that virtues and talents are unable to protect either the Minister or the Monarch, when the sense of oppression is become general and intolerable. But if it be neither wise nor safe for the Great, to persevere in the support of a fraudulent system of Representation, particularly when by their instigation, chiefly the Nation has been involved in a most ruinous and unnecessary War ; on the other hand, let not the People and their active agents imagine that in exceeding the bounds of moderation, either in their measures or the means adopted for their support, there will be no imprudence, no hazard

hazard to the cause of Public Liberty. Let them not forget, that by temperate conduct much was gained by preceding associations, and much more probably might have been added to the stock of Public Liberty, not if more extensive measures of Reformation had been proposed to Parliament in 1785, but if the temperate plan then proposed had been more vigorously supported by the People. A great constitutional weight has been fraudulently taken from the scale of the People; to replace that weight, was then the laudable attempt of Yorkshire, and other populous districts; but their united strength was found unable to move it. A greater portion of the People may now be combined to co-operate for the same purpose, and their lost Constitutional weight may be thus restored with ease to the popular scale. But if the weight to be moved should be increased in proportion to the power applied to move it, it is evident, that the utmost efforts of the People will again terminate in disappointment. Or, to drop the metaphor, and express what is meant more plainly and more completely; if the Friends of Reformation should be persuaded to demand redress on the principles of universal suffrage; their demand will be rejected, to that rejection they must submit, or engage in a doubtful struggle, in which no success could compensate the calamities of the Public. But if following safer

counfels, they fhould unite in defiring a moderate Reformation, and exprefs their firm refolution to acquiefce in that confeffion, fhould it be granted to their request by Parliament, fo juft, fo reasonable a propofal, fupported as it probably would be, by the voice of the Nation, could not long be refifted.

The too eager advocates for Democratic Power, may confider thefe cautious meafures as the effect of timidity, and a Reformation propofed on lefs extenfive principles than theirs, may appear to them little better than the paltry expedient of a day. They may reject the fuggeltions of moderation with difdain; and treat the propofers of fuch limited fchemes of Reformation, as ftrangers to political fcience, as petty Aristocrats, who wifh to form or increafe in the Counties a little Aristocracy of their own clafs and fize; as Men, whole feeble powers cannot comprehend the extent and grandeur of their magnificent fyftems; and the fuccefs of whole exertions would but retard the introduction of that perfect Form of Government which their labours directly tend to eftablifh. * But respectable as thefe perfons may be for their talents or their integrity, yet their cenfure will not be very difcouraging, on the contrary, it will be confidered by the Friends of temperate Reformation, as indirectly attesting

* See the Political Writings of Mr. David Williams and Thomas Cooper, Efq.

their solicitude to preserve Public Order and Tranquillity, as implying a part of that praise which it is their utmost wish to deserve. For respecting this earth and all its sublunary business, what nobler ambition can there be than at once to advance the cause of rational Liberty, and to preserve the Peace and Tranquillity of our Country?

There was a time when the right of Personal Representation was supported by a Noble Duke,* with uncommon force; when he courageously proposed to the Legislature to dissolve the whole Frame of our Representation, to re-construct it on that principle, and to give the right to nominate a House of Commons to a fanatical rabble, who were at that very moment besieging the doors of Parliament, and filling the kingdom with general consternation. And when other less intrepid Reformers, from an anxious solicitude to effect a substantial Reformation of Parliament, without hazard to the Peace of the Country, proposed to reinforce the County-Representation, and after that, to purchase the abolition of the obnoxious Boroughs, these variations of their plan were then opposed by this great Theorist as temporizing schemes, grounded on no stable principle, and shifting as *this Man's fancy*, or as *that Mans' conceit* might direct. Such was then the lan-

* The Duke of Richmond.

guage of this Noble Reformer, and such his lofty superiority to the low considerations of prudence, and the preservation of the Public Tranquillity. Virtuous Politician! Consistent Defender of the Rights of Mankind! And yet it is possible, that more mature consideration may have softened the rigour of this stern Advocate for the indefeasable Right of Suffrage; and other times presenting different views of policy, may have lured Him to stoop from the sublimity of his aerial speculation to the more convenient system of practical accommodation.

But though on the present occasion, the Proposer of this Plan sees little reason to fear any severities of animadversion from the zeal of this great theoretical Reformer, yet other Theorists will be found more constant to support the universal system; these deviations from it will call forth their opposition, and the embarrassing questions, as they will deem them, will undoubtedly be asked, on what principle is this plan of Reformation formed and offered to the Public? And in what mode can it be clearly and safely ascertained, who shall be deemed decent householders throughout the kingdom? To the first of these inquiries, let it be answered, the Plan is formed and offered on the principles of Peace, Conciliation, and a more complete security to the Liberties of the Nation. It is admitted, it is maintained, that no Government can be perfectly agreeable to the rules of theory, under
which

which the right of Personal Representation suffers any abridgement or diminution. But it is also maintained that circumstances may, and in this Country at present, actually do render the establishment of a perfect Commonwealth, or an absolutely equal Representation of the People, impracticable by peaceful means; and ineligible, even if the practicability were most manifest. From the general abhorrence in which that system is held by the opulent and powerful, the impracticability of it by any means, but those of a forcible Revolution, is too apparent to require proof. The ineligibility of it, *in the present circumstances of this Country*, even if it were most easily reducible to practice, is almost as evidently clear. For should the right of Universal Suffrage be now granted, who could for a moment doubt, that in quiet times, our profligate populace would be submissive and venal; that their submission and venality would increase the preponderance of the Great; and destroy the salutary influence of those disinterested and independent Men, who are chiefly to be found in the middle classes of Mankind. And in times of National distress and discontent, it can admit as little doubt, that artful Demagogues might soon inflame the passions of the populace to a wild and ferocious rage for Liberty; and thus raise a hurricane, by which Society would too probably be overturned to its deepest foundation. To lessen and
remove

remove these objections, much might be effected by time ; by the farther diffusion of property, the natural consequence of continued industry, by the salutary discipline of adversity, and the operation of a substantial Reformation of Parliament. By these and other means conjoined, the habits of corruption now prevalent alike in the highest and the lowest classes of Men, might be checked and gradually subdued ; the evil principle of our Government might be destroyed, and in a succeeding generation, some near approach might be made by posterity to the simplicity and purity of our forefathers. But when men had added to the intelligence of a more enlightened age, the innocence and integrity of primitive times, when the rich would disdain to offer, and the poor scorn to receive a bribe, when Public Spirit in a competent degree, was re-animated in the general body of the Nation, *then*, it might be reasonably presumed, that the right of Universal Suffrage would be exercised for the benefit of the Public ; *then*, and *not till then* that Right safely might and ought to be established. In this pacific mode of gradual improvement, the interest of the People might be promoted by means which Reason and Religion jointly approve : popular rights might thus be completely restored without having called forth the tears and groans of one unfortunate Sufferer : the fatal scenes of the Revolution of France might never

ver again be acted in Europe; the example of Britain, preferring peaceful melioration to the violence of rapid Revolution, might teach the numerous nations of the Continent, neither madly to unloose the bands of human society, nor yet, with equal insanity, as the Advocates of Slavery would advise, to perpetuate the tyranny of their Despotic Governments, by reverting to the intolerance of the inquisition, and the extremities of feudal oppression; but rather to endeavour to advance from one degree of moral and political improvement to a yet higher degree; till ultimately, the establishment of perfect Liberty would be found compatible with peace and order, consistent with the secure enjoyment of property, and productive of the truest happiness, the highest moral dignity of mankind. But in the present situation of the Country, it is perfectly justifiable to wave insisting on a personal Representation, and to endeavour to unite the great Body of the People, in a vigorous pursuit of moderate measures of Reform, which are attainable without hazarding by a breach of public tranquillity, either the overthrow of our limited Monarchy, or the loss of those Popular Rights which remain unimpaired; and induce them, instead of forcing the unfavourable circumstances of our condition to yield to the rigour of speculation, to take the far safer, the far better course, to adapt the improvements proposed to the

existing

existing state of the country, and to effect these changes by consent, and through the intervention of Parliament itself.

With respect to the question, who shall be deemed, in the eye of the law, decent householders, and fit to be entrusted with the Right of Suffrage, it is admitted, that the answer to it is not unattended with difficulties, but for which various solutions have occurred. It will be allowed, perhaps, that the householder who not only supports his own family, but contributes to the support of others who may be distressed, might be considered as a decent or substantial householder. For England and Wales this might be a good criterion to ascertain the right to vote; but as contributions to the poor are not legally established in Scotland, the payment of such contributions would be an insufficient rule. It has been thought, that a person who pays the window-tax might be properly deemed a decent householder, and as such entitled to vote, and this mode of ascertaining that right is preferable to the mode first mentioned, because it would equally apply to every part of Great-Britain. But in this mode, householders properly qualified to vote, might sometimes be excluded from that right because from the smallness, not of their fortune but their habitation, they happened not to be liable to pay the tax upon windows. To obviate this difficulty, householders possessing personal property to the
amount

amount of 100l. might be allowed to vote. That property in any part of the kingdom is sufficient to purchase a freehold qualification to vote : Householders of that description are in every view equal to the lowest class of freeholders, and from the more perishable nature of their personal property, it may be justly concluded, they would ever be found at least as much attached to the preservation of peace and order, as persons who possessing landed estates are less exposed to injury and ruin from any popular commotion ; and their personal qualification might be ascertained, on the establishment of a Register, in the very same mode, and with as much certainty and clearness as the qualifications of the Proprietors of freehold estates. But should none of those modes be thought satisfactory ; the difficulty will be readily surmounted, when Parliament has once determined, that decent householders ought to be admitted to vote. It is sufficient for a private individual to suggest the principle ; the mode of applying it, and carrying it into practice, is left, as it ought to be left, with deference to men of superior authority, more experience, and greater legal knowledge.

In fine, it may be objected by some, among those prudent Lovers of Liberty, whose approbation is most to be coveted, that it is a hopeless attempt, to promote a moderate Reformation of Parliament, in these violent times ;
when

when on the one hand popular affociations, in their rash zeal for Liberty, have applauded publications * in which the British People are represented to have no Constitution, no political right, but the unavailing right to petition; and the plunder of the rich is held out, as the incentive to the poor, to effect a Revolution in Britain, on the principles of Republican Equality: thus, under the pretext of promoting Personal Liberty, contributing to the ruin of property, the preservation of which was one principal end, for which Society was formed:— And when on the other hand, Affociations zealous for the Constitution, as they assert, with equal rashness have applauded that Author,† who after having endeavoured to destroy the Representative Rights of the People, and to confirm the abuses and usurpations of which they complain, has laboured to deprive them even of the hope of future redress, and to rob them of their last and most ancient right, solemnly recognized at the Revolution of 1688; their right to meet, in their collective capacity, to consider the grievances endured, and to petition for their removal: thus, under the pretext of defending property, contributing to the ruin of our Personal Rights, the preservation of which was the other great and principal end for which Society was established. To such Men, it were,

* Mr. Paine's.—† Mr. A. Young.

indeed

indeed, a fruitless task to preach moderation, and a just regard to the Constitution. But because there exists manifest danger from the violence of these opposite Associations, that is not a reason for indifference and inactivity, it is a reason why a vigorous effort should be made to preserve the Constitution from these hostile extremes. They who wish to enjoy Peace, Property, and their undoubted Liberties, on the genuine principles of our Constitution, are still the most considerable part of the nation; misled they may have been by rumours, surmises, and the various fallacies of artful Men; corrupted they never can be; they never can be indifferent to the welfare of their Country. To their judgement therefore these propositions are committed, and success is alone wished and expected from their approbation, from their union and zeal to support a good, a prudent, and a strictly limited end, by those regular and peaceful means which under our Constitution, impaired as it is, we have yet a right to employ.

In still adhering to these sentiments and to this middle course of action, unbiassed by the altered interests or opinions of Statesmen, unchanged by the heated temper of the times, unrelaxed by the usual indolence of his age, and undaunted by the slanders and invectives which may yet await him, the Author of this Paper feels the satisfaction of an approving mind. Whether amidst the conflict of contending parties, and

the jarring of irritated passions, the voice of an individual, recommending moderation and a conciliatory spirit, mutually to concede and accept a temperate Reform of Parliament, may be sufficiently heard and attended to, he knows not. His sentiments, unwelcome as they may be to many, it is his duty not to conceal; they proceed from a sincere but anxious heart; they are offered to the Public without a fear or a wish for himself; but for the welfare of his Country, for the general happiness of Mankind, his earnest prayer to the Supreme Ruler of events will be, that He may dispose our hearts to adopt those counsels, whatever they may be, which tend most directly to promote the cause of virtuous Liberty, and to preserve the peace of the Community.

APPENDIX,

APPENDIX,

Containing some Passages transcribed from the late Publication of Mr. A. YOUNG, entitled, "*The Example of France a Warning to Britain*," which Passages are briefly quoted or alluded to, in the preceding Paper; and there considered as being hostile to Public Liberty, and tending to subvert the Constitution of Britain: N. B. They are transcribed from the 3d Edition of that Publication.

At Pages 89, 90, and 91, the Reader may find the following passage: viz.

I Contend, in reply, that it is mere theory to suppose that the House of Commons purports to be the Representatives of the People, if by Representation is meant choice. Being once chosen by the few, they represent the many. They purport to be nothing more than what they are: and they are nothing more than this—Men sitting in a Senate, and forming a third branch of the legislature, chosen by cer-

tain bodies, who, by the Constitution, have the privilege of electing them. They may be accurately described without using the word, or referring to the idea of Representation. To call them the Representatives of the People, is a very inaccurate mode of expression; they ought never to be called by any other name than the House of Commons, to distinguish them from the House of Lords. If they were really the Representatives of the People, they might in theory be good, or better; but they would be something else than what they are, and consequently different from that which has rendered us a great, a free, and a happy nation.

But there is not the least reason to think that they were ever deemed the Representatives of the People; certainly not the Knights, for the 40s. qualification of Electors, the value of money considered, was nearly 40l. of present money. The notion of Representation and Delegation of rights and privileges from the Electors, has vitiated and turned to confusion so many ideas on the subject, because Writers and Parliaments themselves, to suit the purposes of a moment, have thought it for their interest to be esteemed something different than what they really are. The Electors of Members of Parliament do not delegate power, nor entrust privileges, if, by delegation, is meant the transfer of something possessed by those who depute; for the Electors have neither those powers nor those privileges,
and

and therefore cannot delegate them. But the Members when elected, and in combination with the other branches of the legislature, assume, and possess, and give themselves such powers and privileges, which those did not possess who sent them. Hence, then, the septennial act was just as constitutional as the biennial.

At Pages 94 and 95, He may find the following, viz.

But I contend, on the contrary line of fact, that the prosperity and happiness we have enjoyed for a century, and never so great as at present, is owing precisely to the House of Commons NOT speaking the Will of the People; and I am founded in the fact, so notorious to all the world, that such prosperity has grown to its present height under the influence of a House elected not by persons, but by property. If a Parliament, speaking therefore the voice not of the people, has made us what we are, and if National Assemblies, speaking the voice of the People, have brought France to her present situation, I have a double experiment to support me in the assertion, that reforming or changing the Constitution of our House of Commons, so as to make it speak some new voice, untried in this kingdom, would be a procedure on theory, and worthy of theorists only.

At

At Page 174, the following, viz.

It appears to me, that there would be a singular propriety in the associations which are at present spreading through the kingdom, petitioning Parliament to pass an act to declare all clubs, associations, societies, and meetings of men, that assemble for the purpose of obtaining changes in the Constitution, illegal.

At Pages 178 and 179, the following, viz.

The conclusion may be compressed in a few lines: the danger of the moment is great indeed; and only to be guarded against by the most unremitted diligence and activity:—exert that diligence, and bring that activity into play by an unanimous support of the administration entrusted at present with the public safety: the question is not, whether you are a friend or an enemy of that administration; you are certainly a friend to the lives and properties of mankind. Join in associations for our defence, against banditti, cut throats, and Jacobins; join against an enemy more subtle and therefore more dangerous, the friends of reform; the Associators, who would plant the tree of equal liberty; the Mountebanks who have a French nostrum, and Birmingham daggers, for the diseases of our English Constitution. Guard against such miscreant

creant attempts by pointed resolutions ; and call with one voice, on the legislature to suppress, by vigourous and decisive laws, the clubs of sedition ; the associations that call themselves our “ Constitutional ” Instructors and our Friends ; whose lessons are institutes of anarchy ; and whose friendship, should their tenets prevail, would cement with our best blood, that National Convention of Britain with which those societies have so lately threatened us.

THE END.

